Renovation of Taj Mahal, Red Fort and Qutub Minar

2495. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken by Government to boost the tourism industry;

(b) the amount of foreign exchange earned through tourism during the last three years; and

(c) the steps taken since January, 2001 to renovate the most popular tourist places like Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Qutub Minar etc.?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Several measures are being implemented to boost tourism such as the following:

* Positioning and maintaining tourism development as a national priority activity;
* Enhancing and maintaining the competitiveness of India as a tourism destination;
* Improving India's existing tourism products and expanding these to meet new market requirements;
* Creation of world class infrastructure;
* Developing sustained and effective marketing plans and programmes;
* Special thrust to rural and small segment tourism; and
* Attention to civilisational issues and issues pertaining to civic administration and good governance and also of social and cultural values.

(b) The foreign exchange earnings through tourism during the years 1999, 2000 and 2001 have been estimated as Rs. 12951 crores, Rs. 14238 crores and Rs. 14344 crores respectively.

(c) The Archaeological Survey of India has entered into an agreement with the Indian Oil Corporation and signed an MoU with Taj Group of Hotels regarding conservation and environmental

development of Qutub Minar and Taj Mahal respectively. Besides, there are on-going programmes on maintenance, conservation and environmental development of important ASI protected monuments.

Promotion of Tourism

2496. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of the projects and financial assistance sanctioned, released and utilised for development and promotion of tourism sector in the country during the last three years;

(b) the details of achievements made so far in this regard; and

(c) the details of the new projects formulated and implemented in the country, project-wise?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Department of Tourism, Government of India sanctioned 945 projects amounting to Rs. 215.50 crores and released Rs. 90.52 crores for these projects during the last three years *i.e.* 1999-2000 to 2001-02. Utilisation of funds is the responsibility of the concerned State Governments/UT Administrations.

(b) State Governments/UT Administrations are expected to complete the projects within 30 months from the date of sanction of the project.

(c) The following new schemes have been included in the Annual Plan 2002-03:

(1) Integrated development of tourist circuits;

(2) Product/Infrastructure and Destination Development;

(3) Assistance for large revenue generating projects;

(4) Capacity building for service providers.